

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND
ACTION NOTE: Friday 31 January 2014, 2.00pm
Chief Executive’s Board Room, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Present:

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Joan Hewton (JH ERO), Stuart Galloway (SG DRO), Bob Jack (BJ RO), Malcolm Burr (MB RO), David Thomson (DT ERO), David Martin, (DMa RO), Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative)
- **Advisers:** Andy O’Neill (AON Electoral Commission, Gordon Blair, (GB, DRO SOLAR representative), Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office), Steve Sadler (SS Scottish Government) Louise Unwin (LU Scottish Government) David Miller (DMi DRO, AEA Rep)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO), Anne Laird (AL Referendum Guidance Consultant), Dougie McGregor (DMCG Referendum Governance Consultant), Alison Clyne (AC Referendum Project Manager), Rachel Winham & Nick Briggs (Royal Mail)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
1	Admin / Matters arising etc	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sue Bruce (SB RO) <p>Note of Previous Meeting(29 November) & Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the following amendments, the Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting • In the second bullet point under ‘Note of Pervious Meeting, 25 October’, remove the reference to “plans to pilot a new PSN scheme” and replace with “plans for a new PSN scheme”. There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda 	
2	European Parliamentary Elections May 2014	Update from Cabinet Office/Scotland Office	

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		<p>Scotland. This is being reviewed and will be issues to Police officers in advance of the 20 March meeting.</p> <p>Update from Project Team</p> <p>RRO Electoral Commission Performance Standards Submission (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material had been submitted by the RRO to the Electoral Commission as required under their Performance Standards regime, to demonstrate the RRO’s compliance with the various standards. Comments from the Electoral Commission were awaited. <p>Directions from the RRO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RRO is considering making a small number of Directions to LROs to be applied in the delivery of these polls in order to support consistency of voter experience and provide adequate contingency. These have been offered to EROs, LROs and the EMB for consultation. Following consideration of any comments these will formally be issues by the RRO. <p>Status Report (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted <p>Project Plan (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted <p>Risk Register (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted 	

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		<p>Administration: Candidate Briefings, Nominations, Count, Ballot Paper Printing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing for prospective candidates in the European Parliamentary Elections will be held in the City Chambers in Edinburgh on 25 March at 6.30pm. • Nomination Packs will be prepared and offered to all LROs for posting on their websites prior to the 25 March. Packs will be available at the 25 March event • Nominations will be taken in the City Chambers in Edinburgh between 15 April and 24 April (4pm deadline). There is a £5000 deposit which preferably will be payable by bank transfer, although debit cards will be accepted. • The ballot paper artwork will be produced by the RRO’s contracted printer (Adare) and shared by them with the other printers who are serving LROs <p>Joint Seminars with the Electoral Commission – draft agenda (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars have been arranged at 4 venues across Scotland to facilitate attendance by all ROs and their teams. • The focus will be on preparations for the European Elections with a brief overview of the Referendum planning. 	
3	<p>Scottish Independence Referendum: CCO Work Programme</p>	<p>Overview</p> <p>Royal Mail – Elections Planning - Rachel Winham and Nick Briggs attending (to be taken first on the agenda)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of issues were raised with the Royal Mail representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prices – these would be revised in April. Prices for sweeps would 	

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		<p>be revised in July.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivery speed – it was confirmed that the standard for first class delivery is the next working day and for second class is the day following that. It was noted that LROs should factor in the time taken for materials to be delivered to the Royal Mail by printers as this can vary and they should share as much information as possible with their Royal Mail contact. ACTION Royal Mail to confirm the time at which they need to receive material for this next day delivery to be guaranteed and to provide a list of information required from LROs to prevent delays. ○ Local contacts – ACTION Royal Mail will supply a list of local contacts (Event Planners) to the EMB for circulation to LROs ○ Industrial Action - All LROs / COs should have loss of a supplier (Royal Mail) on their Risk Register as a potential risk. However, Royal Mail noted that there were no current or expected industrial relations issues. Royal Mail confirmed that they have contingency plans in place for industrial action, fuel shortages, weather and other major risks. ○ Holiday dates – Royal Mail noted that holiday dates (e.g. over the Easter period) had been confirmed for 2014. LROs would be required to consider these dates in their planning. ACTION Royal Mail to provide a list of holiday dates which may have an impact on planning for the European Parliamentary Elections and the Scottish Independence Referendum. <p>Registration Issues</p> <p>Students in higher education: Access to voting in the Scottish Independence</p>	<p>ROYAL MAIL</p> <p>ROYAL MAIL</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>

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		<p>Referendum, An options paper (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IM presented his paper which was welcomed as a good analysis of the position. The proposals were noted • ACTION – COs and EROs to consider local and national engagement with young people to ensure that there is a broad understanding of the issues and deadlines. There is an opportunity for engagement with school leavers in the spring before they leave to attend university. <p>Draft Fees and Charges (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted. • Again, as per the Order for the European elections, the claim will be on the basis of the entire figure allocated; there is no allocation to particular heads of expenses. Should any CO anticipate that there is a major shortfall as a result of justifiable expenditure, this should be raised as soon as possible with the Scottish Government Office. ACTION All COs to review their allowances and raise any concerns directly with the Scottish Government by their deadline of 14 February. <p>Governance/Project Management</p> <p>Project Status Report (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • CH noted that he and MP had discussed lessons learned from the 2011 Referendum with Jenny Dawes, the CCO, which would inform planning around the count event. 	<p>ALL</p>

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		<p>Project Plan (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted <p>Risk Register (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted <p>Guidance</p> <p>Directions from the CCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is intended that a paper is taken to the February meeting of the EMB to outline a series of proposed directions from the CCO to be made to govern the delivery of the Referendum. • These will address voter facing issues such as poll card and postal vote dispatch dates where consistency is important. Integrity issues such as the % of AVIs to be checked and the count model to be used will also be addressed. • It is intended that these will be the subject of consultation with a range of stakeholders including COs, EROs, the Electoral Commission and the Campaign organisations. <p>Progress Report on Guidance for Counting Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elements of the guidance have been completed and offered to COs and their teams for comment. • The material has also been circulated to campaign groups, EROs, SOLAR 	

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		<p>and the political parties panel for their comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work of AL in completing this work was recognised and commended. <p>Update from Forms Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full suite of forms for the Referendum has been drafted as part of the Guidance workstream. <p>Count</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMcG has developed count protocols for the collation of the 32 totals into a single national result. These will be applied and assessed at the European elections. There will be a session on this at the seminars in February to brief LROs/COs on the approach. <p>Communications Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tender was in preparation to recruit a PR professional with broadcast experience to support the CCO particularly in terms of managing broadcasters at the Count event on 18/19 September. Note that The Electoral Commission had published their Observers Code of Conduct for the Referendum for consultation. ACTION ALL to review and offer any comments to the Electoral Commission 	<p>ALL</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>RRO/CCO Briefing to SOLACE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP had provided a briefing to SOLACE this morning on the preparations for both electoral events. This included an outline of the proposed directions. 	

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5	Bulletins/Website www.electionsscotland.info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that the EMB website is now live Minor bulletins have been issued by email as issues have arisen for communication to LROs and their teams 	
6	Issues raised by Election Teams across Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams had raised a number of issues in relation to the service from the Royal Mail. 	
7	Individual Electoral Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IM noted the current position. 	
8	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	<p>UK Electoral Advisory Board –Update from Convener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major issues to report <p>Elections & Registrations Working Group – Update from Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There had been particular discussion at the January meeting of the challenges flowing from the early release of postal votes. This was to be the subject of further discussion. ACTION CH to draft a paper for the EMB on the key issues and a proposed approach. There had been a meeting of all election suppliers – software and printers – to discuss the issues around IER Forms and printing for the European elections. This had been an opportunity for the printers for the Scottish LROs to discuss cooperation. 	CH

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9	SOLAR Elections Working Group Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues raised GB and CH would be presenting and the SOLAR Annual Conference 	
10	Scottish Government Update on eCounting for 2017 Local Government Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that a legacy report has been completed and planning is now underway for the procurement of an eCounting system for 2017. The schedule was noted given the congested electoral calendar in coming years. A Project Board will need to be formed to oversee the procurement. 	
11	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that a meeting of the EMB would be scheduled in mid-October to review the Scottish Independence Referendum. 	
Date of next meeting: 28 February 2014 at 2pm, Room 9/ 42 City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1 YJ			

Future Meetings

28 March
25 April
30 May

27 June
25 July
29 August